

APPENDIX B - CLEAN COPY (UNOFFICIAL) OF
PENDING CLAIMS FOR SERIAL NO. 09/823,909

1. (Amended) A system useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel including a first leg, a second leg, a third leg, and a platform coupled to the first, second, and third legs, the system comprising:

a first brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the first brace, the first brace

forming an acute angle with the first leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the first brace at a second location along the first brace,

the first and second locations along the first brace defining a first brace length

between them;

wherein at least a portion of the first brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

A' 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the first brace is coupled to the first leg through a first footing structure located between the first brace and the first leg, the first footing structure being coupled to one end of the first leg.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the first leg has at least one opening near the end to which the footing structure is coupled, and further comprising a pin having an axis, the pin positioned within the opening such that the first leg may rotate about the axis.

4. The system of claim 2, wherein the first footing structure includes one or more protrusions defining space into which material from a floor beneath a body of water collects when the footing structure contacts the floor.

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5. (Amended) The system of claim 2, wherein the anchoring structure include the first brace.
 6. The system of claim 1, wherein the anchoring structure includes a winch.
 7. The system of claim 1, wherein the anchoring structure includes the platform.
 8. The system of claim 1, wherein one or more racks are secured to the first leg, and wherein the anchoring structure includes a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks.
 9. (Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein one or more racks are secured to the first leg, and wherein the anchoring structure includes a ring coupled to the platform, the ring having a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks.
 10. The system of claim 1, wherein the first brace is rigid.
 11. The system of claim 1, wherein the first brace is flexible.
 12. The system of claim 1, wherein the first brace comprises multiple loops that are linked together or wire rope.

13. (Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a second brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the second brace, the

second brace forming an acute angle with the first leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the second brace at a second location along the second

brace, the first and second locations along the second brace defining a second

brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the second brace length is located directly beneath the

platform.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the anchoring structures coupled to the first and second braces are the same anchoring structure.

15. (Amended) The system of claim 13, further comprising:

a third brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the third brace, the third brace

forming an acute angle with the first leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the third brace at a second location along the third

brace, the first and second locations along the third brace defining a third brace

length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the third brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the anchoring structures coupled to the first, second, and third braces are the same anchoring structure.

17. (Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising:
a second brace coupled to the second leg at a first location along the second brace, the
second brace forming an acute angle with the second leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the second brace at a second location along the second
brace, the first and second locations along the second brace defining a second
brace length between them;
wherein at least a portion of the second brace length is located directly beneath the
platform.

A. 18. The system of claim 17, wherein the second brace is coupled to the second leg through a
second footing structure located between the second brace and the second leg, the second footing
structure being coupled to one end of the second leg.

19. (Amended) The system of claim 17, further comprising:
a third brace coupled to the second leg at a first location along the third brace, the third
brace forming an acute angle with the second leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the third brace at a second location along the third
brace, the first and second locations along the third brace defining a third brace
length between them;
wherein at least a portion of the third brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the anchoring structures coupled to the second and third
braces are the same anchoring structure.

21. (Amended) The system of claim 19, further comprising:
a fourth brace coupled to the second leg at a first location along the fourth brace, the
fourth brace forming an acute angle with the second leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the fourth brace at a second location along the fourth
brace, the first and second locations along the fourth brace defining a fourth brace
length between them;
wherein at least a portion of the fourth brace length is located directly beneath the
platform.

A' 22. (Amended) The system of claim 17, further comprising:
a third brace coupled to the third leg at a first location along the third brace, the third
brace forming an acute angle with the third leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the third brace at a second location along the third
brace, the first and second locations along the third brace defining a third brace
length between them;
wherein at least a portion of the third brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the third brace is coupled to the third leg through a third
footing structure located between the third brace and the third leg, the third footing structure
being coupled to one end of the third leg.

24. (Amended) The system of claim 22, further comprising:

a fourth brace coupled to the third leg at a first location along the fourth brace, the fourth brace forming an acute angle with the third leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the fourth brace at a second location along the fourth brace, the first and second locations along the fourth brace defining a fourth brace length between them;
wherein at least a portion of the fourth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein the anchoring structures coupled to the third and fourth braces are the same anchoring structures.

26. (Amended) The system of claim 24, further comprising:
a fifth brace coupled to the third leg at a first location along the fifth brace, the fifth brace forming an acute angle with the third leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the fifth brace at a second location along the fifth brace, the first and second locations along the fifth brace defining a fifth brace length between them;
wherein at least a portion of the fifth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

27. (Amended) The system of claim 22, the vessel further having a fourth leg, and the system further comprising:

a fourth brace coupled to the fourth leg at a first location along the fourth brace, the fourth brace forming an acute angle with the fourth leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the fourth brace at a second location along the fourth brace, the first and second locations along the fourth brace defining a fourth brace length between them;
wherein at least a portion of the fourth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

28. (Amended) The system of claim 27, the vessel further having a fifth leg, and the system further comprising:

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a fifth brace coupled to the fifth leg at a first location along the fifth brace, the fifth brace forming an acute angle with the fifth leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the fifth brace at a second location along the fifth brace, the first and second locations along the fifth brace defining a fifth brace length between them;
wherein at least a portion of the fifth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

29. (Amended) The system of claim 28, the vessel further having a sixth leg, and the system further comprising:

a sixth brace coupled to the sixth leg at a first location along the sixth brace, the sixth brace forming an acute angle with the sixth leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the sixth brace at a second location along the sixth brace, the first and second locations along the sixth brace defining a sixth brace length between them;

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wherein at least a portion of the sixth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

40. (Amended) A vessel comprising:

a platform;

three legs coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the three legs;

a flexible brace coupled to each of the three legs at a first location along each flexible brace, each flexible brace forming an acute angle with its respective leg;

an anchoring structure coupled to each flexible brace at a second location along each flexible brace, the first and second locations along each flexible brace defining a flexible brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of each flexible brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

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41. The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the flexible braces is coupled to its respective leg through a footing structure located between that flexible brace and the respective leg, the footing structure being coupled to one end of the respective leg.

42. The vessel of claim 41, wherein the footing structure includes one or more protrusions defining space into which material from a floor beneath a body of water collects when the footing structure contacts the floor.

43. The vessel of claim 40, wherein the anchoring structures to which the flexible braces are coupled are the same anchoring structure.

44. The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the anchoring structures includes a winch.

45. The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the anchoring structures includes the platform.

46. The vessel of claim 40, wherein one or more racks are secured to at least one of the three legs, and wherein at least one of the anchoring structures includes a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks.

47. The vessel of claim 40, wherein one or more racks are secured to at least one of the three legs, and wherein at least one of the anchoring structures includes a ring coupled to the platform, the ring having a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks.

48. The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the three flexible braces comprises multiple loops that are linked together.

49. The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the three flexible braces comprises wire rope.

50. The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the three legs comprises a metal cylinder.

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51. The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the three legs comprises multiple trusses.
52. (Amended) The vessel of claim 40, further comprising:
a fourth leg coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along
the four legs; and
a fourth brace coupled to the fourth leg at a first location along the fourth brace, the
fourth brace forming an acute angle with the fourth leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the fourth brace at a second location along the fourth
brace, the first and second locations along the fourth brace defining a fourth brace
length between them;
wherein at least a portion of the fourth brace length is located directly beneath the
platform.
53. (Amended) The vessel of claim 52, further comprising:
a fifth leg coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along
the five legs; and
a fifth brace coupled to the fifth leg at a first location along the fifth brace, the fifth brace
forming an acute angle with the fifth leg; and
an anchoring structure coupled to the fifth brace at a second location along the fifth brace,
the first and second locations along the fifth brace defining a fifth brace length
between them;
wherein at least a portion of the fifth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

54. (Amended) A method useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel having a platform and three or more legs coupled to the platform such that platform may be raised or lowered along the legs, the method comprising:

coupling a first brace to one of the legs;

orienting the first brace at an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled; and

positioning at least a portion of the first brace directly beneath the platform.

55. The method of claim 54, wherein the coupling includes coupling the first brace to one of the three legs through a footing structure located between the first brace and the one leg.

56. The method of claim 54, further comprising:
coupling the first brace to an anchoring structure.

57. The method of claim 56, wherein the anchoring structure is the platform.

58. The method of claim 57, wherein the coupling the first brace to an anchoring structure includes coupling the first brace to the platform through a winch located between the platform and the first brace.

59. The method of claim 58, wherein the platform may be raised or lowered along the legs using pinions driven by one or more motors, wherein the winch is driven by a winch motor, and further comprising:

synchronizing the winch motor with the one or more motors; and
raising the platform;
whereby tension in the first brace is maintained during the raising.

60. The method of claim 58, wherein the platform may be raised or lowered along the legs using pinions driven by one or more motors, wherein the winch is driven by a winch motor, and further comprising:

synchronizing the winch motor with the one or more motors; and
lowering the platform;
whereby tension in the first brace is maintained during the lowering.

61. The method of claim 56, wherein one or more racks are secured to the first leg, wherein the anchoring structure includes a ring coupled to the platform, the ring having a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks, and wherein the coupling the first brace to an anchoring structure includes coupling the first brace to the ring.

62. The method of claim 56, wherein the first brace is coupled to one of the three legs at a first location, the first brace is secured to the anchoring structure at a second location, and the first brace has a first brace length defined between the first and second locations, the method further comprising:

increasing the first brace length while raising the platform.

63. The method of claim 62, further comprising:

decreasing the first brace length while lowering the platform.

64. The method of claim 54, further comprising:
monitoring deflection of one or more of the legs.
65. The method of claim 54, further comprising:
tightening the first brace when it becomes slack.
66. The method of claim 54, wherein the legs of the vessel are oriented in original positions within a body of water, the method further comprising:
lifting a leg that horizontally shifts in order to restore the original position of the leg.
67. The method of claim 54, wherein the first brace is rigid.
68. The method of claim 67, further comprising:
rotating the first brace; and
coupling the first brace to an anchoring structure using at least a pin.
69. The method of claim 54, wherein the first brace is flexible.
70. (Amended) The method of claim 54, further comprising:
coupling a second brace to one of the other two legs;
orienting the second brace at an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled; and

positioning at least a portion of the second brace directly beneath the platform.

71. (Amended) The method of claim 70, further comprising:

coupling a third brace to the third leg;

orienting the third brace at an acute angle with the third; and

positioning at least a portion of the third brace directly beneath the platform.

72. (Amended) The method of claim 71, wherein the vessel includes a fourth leg coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the four legs, the method further comprising:

coupling a fourth brace to the fourth leg;

orienting the fourth brace at an acute angle with the fourth leg; and

positioning at least a portion of the fourth brace directly beneath the platform.

82. (New) The vessel of claim 40, wherein an anchoring structure to which one of the braces is coupled includes another leg, such that that brace is coupled to one of the three legs and to an anchoring structure that includes another of the three legs.

83. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the anchoring structure includes another leg, such that the first brace is coupled to one of the legs and to an anchoring structure that includes another of the three legs.

84. (New) A vessel comprising:

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a platform;

three legs coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along

the three legs;

a footing structure coupled to an end of one of the legs; and

a flexible brace coupled at two different locations to the leg with the footing structure, the

flexible brace forming an acute angle with that leg, and one of the two locations

being on the footing structure.
